



ERIE COUNTY LEGISLATURE

HON. LYNNE DIXON
LEGISLATOR

September 28, 2017

The Honorable Mark C. Poloncarz
County Executive
95 Franklin Street, 16th Floor
Buffalo, New York 14202

Dear County Executive Poloncarz:

Today, the Erie County Legislature held a discussion during the Health and Human Services Committee meeting to address concerns in Child Protective Services (CPS). I believe this was an excellent dialogue between employees from CPS, union representatives and Legislators. However, I believe this issue needs to progress and can't stay at the stalemate it currently finds itself.

I understand there are many questions surrounding how the county can improve the working environment in the CPS office, but I am sure we can all agree that it needs to be improved. What I heard today did not suggest to me that we can't address this issue, rather the opposite. I heard testimony as to why we must get to the bottom of the issues and make changes. The CPS employees who put together the report and spoke out have shown incredible strength and commitment to CPS case workers and the families they serve.

I urge you to please do what you can to address this issue. At today's discussion, I heard from a majority of Legislators who are willing to continue this conversation and work with all sides to improve working conditions. The rate of turnover can no longer be accepted, inexperienced case workers are struggling and so is the entire office. We are not serving the public to the best of our abilities and that must change.

During the meeting, representatives for the CPS employees stated that you would not discuss the issue with them because their concerns should be discussed in union negotiations. I respectfully disagree with this response. CPS case workers are overburdened, underappreciated, and often traumatized by the work they do. These aren't issues to discuss in a contract negotiation; these are human beings facing extreme circumstances that deserve our attention now. I'd respectfully request you meet with them.

Thank you in advance for your consideration and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Lynne M. Dixon".

Lynne M. Dixon
Erie County Legislator